

SUBJECT INDEX:

JUNGLES ~
LIANAS & LOINCLOTHS

See also: AFRICA, ASIA, FERAL CHILDREN,
SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

Bare flesh is the unspoken hook of all jungle fantasies (as any schoolboy knows, who leafed surreptitiously through the pages of the *National Geographic* in his school library) – the rainforest as a steamy no-man’s-land where all the constraints of the civilised world can be cast off, if only symbolically, by assumption of the ritual teacloth. The price of that release, of course, is often the surrender of our status as the dominant species. The law of the jungle divides all into the eaters and the eaten, and man, without the protection of his advanced technology, becomes merely another primate on the dodge from the big cats, the alligators, the rogue elephants, army ants and giant spiders.

The TARZAN fantasies of the screen would not have it that way. Whilst retaining the subtext (if only in their promotional posters) of unbridled sexual possibilities, they frequently strove to emphasise Tarzan (and his family, scattered upon him as manna from heaven) as a civilised Westerner living the ascetic life, but undisputed master of all he surveys: elephants, alligators and hostile tribes included. In reply to romantic notions of the “noble savage”, Tarzan was written (for the screen) as the savage noble, the white man bending even the jungle to his will.

For reasons not unconnected with the flow of economic migrants from the third world to the west in the latter half of the century, it became increasingly futile to cling to exotic Victorian myths of the Dark Continent, remote and unknowable, so successive post-war Tarzans have floundered about trying to redefine the character as a family-oriented, post-colonialist roving troubleshooter with impeccable environmentalist credentials. Flatly absurd, yet the films keep on coming, and they keep on promising what they have never supplied. Under that famous loincloth, the jungle man has had a little operation done, the better to concentrate his mind on philanthropic matters.

Tarzan has seen more screen incarnations than James Bond or Huckleberry Finn, but the fantasy reached delirious heights in the films of Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O’Sullivan (not forgetting, of course, buxom Johnny Sheffield) who lived in a tree-house straight out of Disney’s **“SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON”**, quite the latest thing in rainforest comfort, an all-American family in minimalist wardrobe. Tarzan spent his days laying waste to Nazi spies or corrupt Great White Hunters, but his adversaries were almost invariably white men. The black folks were relegated to supporting characters in their own continent, and had less dialogue and screen time between them than the comic-relief chimpanzee, Cheetah. And lest that be thought a failing of the insensitive 1930s, exactly the same was true of **“TARZAN GOES TO INDIA”** (62), or for that matter, **“THE EMERALD FOREST”** (85).

Adventures of a Jungle Boy TV series
The Emerald Forest
Un Indien dans la Ville
Jungle 2 Jungle

Little Jungle Boy	Australia 1970 : Scientists discover a feral child (<i>Rahman Rahman</i>) who has grown up in the Malaysian jungle, and try to shield him from exploitation by “commercial interests”.
The Lost Volcano	US 1950 : Third in the “Bomba the Jungle Boy” series, starring a superannuated Johnny Sheffield, but also featuring <i>Tommy Ivo</i> as a zoologist’s son (yep – in leopardskin loincloth) kidnapped by greedy treasure-hunters.
El Rey de los Gorilas	Spain 1976 : “King of the Gorillas”. Lame Spanish Tarzan ripoff, but with the hero’s boyhood in the jungle accounting for a large part of the film, and the adult version having a son of 12, so the Johnny Sheffield quotient is more than amply filled.
Taffy and the Jungle Hunter	
Tarzan and the Jungle Boy	
Tarzan Finds a Son	
Tarzan Goes to India	
Tarzan's Savage Fury	
Tarzan's Secret Treasure	
Tarzan's Three Challenges	
Tim Tyler's Luck	
Young Eagles[serial]	US 1937 : matinee serial

Non-fiction

~ 16 titles ~